

MENTORING OF GRADUATE STUDENTS AT  
THE SCHOOL OF INFORMATION AND LIBRARY SCIENCE AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

by  
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This study describes the results of a survey administered to a cohort of graduate students in the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The survey was conducted to determine the extent of mentoring experienced by students prior to earning their professional degrees.

Most students surveyed believed they received mentoring while enrolled, with a majority of students having more than one mentor. Mentors were generally either faculty members or people encountered at the workplace. Relationships tended to develop naturally over time rather than being assigned or sought out by either partner. More students earning the MSLS had mentors than did those earning the MSIS, and proportionally more females than males had mentors. Nearly all felt the mentoring experience was beneficial, and most want to mentor others in the future.

#### Headings:

Library schools – students

Mentors

Surveys – library schools

Surveys – mentoring

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## I. INTRODUCTION

From humanity's earliest days, there have been members of communities who possess specialized knowledge or skills gained through experience. Sometimes these individuals have taken others under their wings so as to share the wisdom of their experience. We often refer to such individuals as *mentors*. Mentoring may be one of the oldest forms of human development, dating back to the Palaeolithic era, when those with specialized talents or skills such as healing or the making of stone tools instructed younger people in these arts (Shea 1994). The first written mention of mentoring, however, as well as the origin of the word, is found in Homer's epic poem, *The Odyssey*. Odysseus, king of Ithaca and hero of the tale, entrusts the education of his son, Telemachus, to his old friend, Mentor, while Odysseus is off fighting in the Trojan War. The goddess Athene, in the guise of Mentor, became the advisor, guide, sponsor, and tutor – the *mentor* – of Telemachus.

Over the past few decades, the subject of mentoring has generated an immense amount of writing and research in a variety of fields. To date, however, there has not been as much written on mentoring in the information professions as there has been in the literatures of other professions, and there has been little investigation of how mentoring affects the development of persons who do not yet hold an advanced degree in library and information science. This study explores the origins and development of mentoring relationships of graduate students enrolled in a school of information and library science

in hopes of further elucidating the state of mentoring available to those preparing to embark on their professional careers.

### **What is Mentoring?**

A review of the literature on mentoring reveals that there is no single agreed-upon definition for either what constitutes a mentor or what is meant by ‘mentoring.’ In the early 1980s, some researchers criticized the literature on mentoring for this inconsistency (e.g., Speizer 1981; Merriam 1983, who states, “Its meaning appears to be defined by the scope of a research investigation or by a particular setting where it occurs” (p. 163)). In spite of this criticism, even today definitions of the term vary from article to article. Some definitions are narrow, while others are less so. What follows is an exploration of some of the various manifestations of the terms *mentor* and *mentoring* as they appear in the literature on adult development and business.

Taking their vision of mentoring from the traditional figure of Homer’s Mentor, Levinson *et al.* (1978) contributed the first large-scale study in which mentoring was examined. In their work, Levinson *et al.* research the life cycle of men through interviews with forty adult males. Their description of the mentoring relationship, which they describe as “one of the most complex, and developmentally important, a man can have in early adulthood” (p. 97) is based on this work. According to the Levinson study, mentoring can take place in the workplace or in a more informal setting; what is important is not the formal roles played by the participants but rather the “character of the relationship and the functions it serves” (p. 98). Functions filled by mentors may include those of teacher, sponsor, host, guide, exemplar, counselor, and supporter and facilitator of the “realization of the Dream,” or the vision the mentee has about the kind of life he or

she wants (pp. 98-99); according to Levinson *et al.*, this latter function is the most important of all. The mentor serves as a figure who aids the mentee's transition into a new phase of life.

The mentoring relationship is described as a form of love, generally between people separated in age by 8 to 15 years, and lasting from two years to ten. Although Levinson *et al.* caution that age differences other than 8 to 15 years make it difficult to form and maintain a mentoring relationship, a person much older than the mentee, or a person the same age or younger, can function as a mentor figure if he or she possesses the right qualities. Levinson *et al.* state that mentoring is critically important: "without adequate mentoring a young man's entry into the adult world is greatly hampered" (p. 338); however, most participants in the study received little mentoring, and good relationships were rare.

Anderson and Shannon (1988) also turn to the classical version of the mentor found in the *Odyssey*, from which they glean several conclusions about the nature of mentoring. According to their analysis, mentoring is a process that is:

- *Intentional.* The mentor intentionally engages in the responsibilities of caring for and educating his or her mentee;
- *Nurturing.* The mentor encourages the growth and development of the mentee;
- *Insightful.* The mentor shares his or her insights with the mentee, who learns from the wisdom of the mentor;
- *Supportive and protective.* The mentor does his or her best to support the mentee and shield him or her until s/he reaches maturity (pp.25-26).

In addition to these four core characteristics, Anderson and Shannon conclude that the mentor's function as a *role model* is central to the mentoring process. According to the

authors, by taking the human form of Mentor, “Athene provided Telemachus with a standard and style of behavior which he could understand and follow” (p. 26).

Anderson (1987) defines mentoring as

a nurturing process in which a more skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels, and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter’s professional and/or personal development. Mentoring functions are carried out within the context of an ongoing, caring relationship between the mentor and the protégé.

Anderson and Shannon (1988) define the essential attributes of this definition as the process of nurturing; the act of serving as a role model; the five mentoring functions (teaching, sponsoring, encouraging, counseling and befriending); the focus on professional and/or personal development; and the ongoing, caring relationship between mentor and mentee.

Clawson (1980) calls this classical form of mentor a “life mentor, who in the Homeric tradition was concerned with every aspect of his protégé’s career advancement” (p. 146). He goes on to suggest that most people now think of mentoring as it relates to their career objectives; hence, the “career mentor.” He notes that this modern use of the word has caused fragmentation of the term, so that now people are labeled mentors when they fulfill only one or two of the many roles played by classical life mentors (e.g., teacher, coach, trainer, role model, protector, sponsor, confidant, and friend). Although this modern usage has confused the meaning of *mentor* in some respects, it is a reflection of the ability of people today to learn from a variety of sources instead of relying on one person as may have been the case in the past. Clawson, however, is quick to point out that in his view, a person who plays only one or two of the traditional roles of the mentor may be more accurately characterized solely as a teacher, coach, sponsor, etc. In his



view, a mentor is a single person who plays many of those roles for another person, thus forming a “comprehensiveness of influence” (1980: p. 147). In addition to this comprehensive influence, there must also be mutuality present to the relationship. A relationship with a high degree of mutuality between two individuals, one of whom displays comprehensive influence, is a classical mentor-protégé relationship; a relationship with a career mentor is similar but differs in degree of mutuality and comprehensiveness. Figure 1 graphically demonstrates Clawson’s thesis.

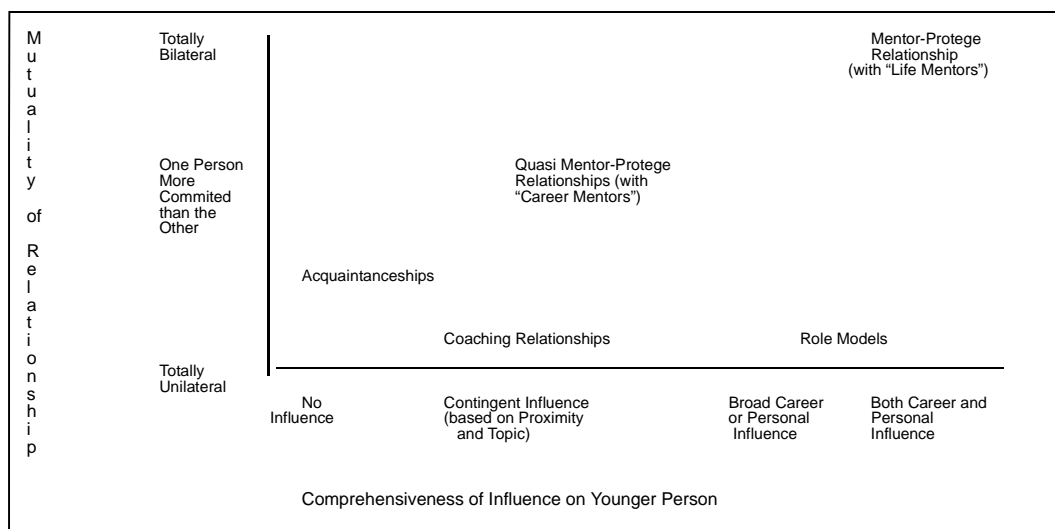


Figure 1: after Clawson (1980: Figure 8.1: “Two essential dimensions in identifying Mentor-protégé relationships”).

Fisher (1994) agrees that there must be a distinction between life mentors and career mentors. She states that although life mentors may also play the roles of career mentors, the opposite is rarely true. Fisher notes that although it is difficult to provide a single, precise definition of *mentor*, certain common characteristics may be discerned, including intelligence, integrity, ability, a professional attitude, high personal standards, enthusiasm, and a willingness to share their own accumulated knowledge (pp. 4-5).

Zey (1984:7) defines a mentor almost solely in terms of career mentoring.

According to Zey, a mentor is:

a person who oversees the career and development of another person usually a junior, through teaching, counseling, providing psychological support, protecting, and at times promoting and sponsoring. The mentor may perform any or all of the above functions during the mentor relationship.

Clawson believes that a mentor must be older and of a higher status than the mentee. Phillips-Jones (1982), however, in one of the earliest book-length treatments of the topic, proposes a much wider view of mentoring that encompasses both “primary” and “secondary” mentors. She defines mentors in general as “influential people who significantly help you reach your major life goals” and suggests that these people are in situations where they are able, “through who or what they know—to promote your welfare, training or career” (p. 21). According to Phillips-Jones, primary mentors may be people such as the traditional mentor as well as those who fill other roles, such as supportive boss, organization sponsor, professional career mentor, patron, and “invisible godparent.” She also suggests that there are other supportive people who can provide mentoring, albeit at a less significant level. These individuals, described as “secondary mentors,” include peer strategizers, hero role models, and career favor-doers (pp. 22-25).

Shapiro, Haseltine, and Rowe (1978) propose a continuum of supportive relationships. This continuum of “patron relationships” extends from mentors at one end to peer pals at the other, with sponsors and guides in between. They note that mentoring relationships tend to be restrictive, although they can result in the greatest success for the mentee. Peer pal relationships, on the other hand, are more open, but they result in smaller steps toward success. Shapiro *et al.* suggest that having a variety of role models, from mentors to peer pals, may prove to be an especially attractive and useful strategy, as it provides a wider range of options and solutions than restricting oneself to a single form of supportive relationship does. This suggestion from Shapiro *et al.* reflects Clawson’s

idea of how the fragmentation of the traditional view of the mentor can be of benefit in the modern world.

This brief exploration only scratches the surface of the many definitions of mentoring present in the literature. Most definitions, however, appear to be variations on a theme: a mentor is someone who takes a personal interest in assisting another in their personal and/or professional development. As Nankivell and Shoolbred point out, however, “A precise definition of this process, which takes various forms, is not as important as a focus on how mentoring works, what benefits it can offer and how the pitfalls can be avoided” (1997: p. 93).

### **Problems in Mentoring Relationships**

Many authors point out that mentoring relationships are not all unmitigated successes or free of problems. Some difficulties may be related the differences in age between partners in the mentoring relationship. Lary (1998) points out that the phenomenon known in psychoanalysis as “transference” may be a particular problem. In transference, an individual shifts his/her emotional attitudes about a significant individual in his/her past to another individual with whom s/he is working. This may lead to excessive maternalism/paternalism in the elder member or dependency on the part of the younger member (Levinson *et al.* 1978: p. 100-101).

At other times, problems may arise because the person acting as mentor may not be suited to the task. Mentors may be afraid that their mentees will outshine them and may therefore behave in a destructive manner at times. Another problem is the so-called “Fagin Factor” (Shea 1994: pp. 78-79). Named after the criminal Fagin from *Oliver Twist*, this phenomenon occurs when a person in the position of mentor offers

questionable advice. Alternatively, the mentee may not be well-suited for the relationship and may be jealous, envious, or excessively dependent (Phillips-Jones 1982).

Ultimately, the very intensity of the relationship may lead to difficulties. The intimacy of the mentor-mentee relationship may lead to the romantic or sexual intimacy that may prove problematic (Sheehy 1976; Phillips-Jones 1982). In addition, when one member or the other outgrows the relationship, the intimacy and intensity of the relationship may lead to problems in reaching a mutually amicable ending. According to Levinson *et al.* (1978), mentoring relationships often end in conflict and with negative feelings on both sides due to such intensity.

### **Benefits of Mentoring Relationships**

In spite of the aforementioned difficulties, it appears that mentoring relationships are generally positive. Although some early reports on mentoring uncritically trumpeted the necessity of a mentor for all who wished to succeed (e.g., Levinson 1978, Roche 1979; see Speizer 1981 for discussion), later studies have demonstrated that mentoring does indeed have many benefits for both mentors and mentees.

Phillips-Jones (1982: pp. 30-37) lists seven advantages to having a mentor. Mentors provide their mentees with advice on career goals; encouragement; new or improved skills and knowledge; a role model; new opportunities and resources; increased exposure and visibility; and “a bridge to maturity,” or socialization into a new role. In addition to these advantages, a 1961 study by Schmidt (1986) demonstrated that individuals who received mentoring (termed “sponsorship” in the study) moved upward more quickly than their peers who were not in such a relationship. These findings are replicated by Wilbur (1986), who states that receiving mentoring is a significant predictor

of career success. Interestingly, he notes that it is not the quantity of mentoring relationships that is important, but rather the quality or intensiveness of the relationships (p. 148).

Mentors themselves may benefit from helping others. Mentors are able to make use of their own knowledge and skill in new and different ways. They may also learn from their mentees. In addition, an older mentor may find that his or her relationship with a mentee is a connection to “the forces of youthful energy” (Levinson *et al.* 1978: p. 253). Mentors may gain a degree of personal satisfaction from their work, as well as respect from colleagues. They may also learn to reassess their own actions and assumptions, which could prove beneficial to their own careers (Roberts 1986).

Organizations may also benefit from the presence of mentoring relationships (Kram 1980). Mentoring relationships often aid in the development of talent that can be put to use by the organization. Mentees are able to learn technical and organizational knowledge more quickly, thereby making them more effective members of the organization. In addition, mentors are able to better utilize their own expertise, which also benefits the organization.

Professions may also benefit from mentoring relationships (Hunt and Michael 1983: p. 83). Having a mentor helps a mentee to become a productive, active member in a profession. In turn, they are likely to mentor other new professionals, thereby starting a cyclical process of mentoring relationships that will continue to enrich the profession.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The modern study of mentoring and other supportive relationships and their roles in adult development began to appear in the 1970s. Mentoring relationships also became a hot topic in the business literature starting in the 1970s, when several seminal articles trumpeted the benefits (and, according to some articles, the necessity) of having or being a mentor. There has been a comparable interest in mentoring in library and information science. Although it has been pointed out that no review of the literature on mentoring could be truly comprehensive, as the amount published has grown by leaps and bounds (Nankivell and Shoolbred 1997: p. 94), it is hoped that the following review will provide a grounding in the literature on mentoring in library and information science.

One of the earliest studies of mentoring in the field of library and information science is Ferriero's (1982) survey of the experiences of the directors of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) institutions. His study demonstrates a correlation between mentoring experience and later success among the library directors. Respondents indicated that many of them were mentored during library school as well as later during their careers, particularly during their first five years as practicing librarians. Most of those who reported having a mentor also served as a mentor to others later in their careers. Ferriero concludes:

The ARL library is a management laboratory where directors afford junior librarians the opportunities to experiment, to be creative, to make mistakes and learn from them, to observe the machinations of a library within a political

institution, and to observe a successful senior librarian in action. The process benefits the director, the younger librarian, and the institution. The profession is the real beneficiary of the mentor-protégé relationship, for such relationships ensure the passing on of the light to others (p. 363).

Roberts (1986) also suggests that mentoring in the academic library is a good means of staff development for junior professionals or recent library school graduates. According to Roberts, mentoring can have benefits for mentees, mentors, and the organization as a whole. In fact, for mentees, establishing a mentoring relationship early in a career “may be an important contribution to the formation of a professional identity” (p. 118). Mentors may gain personal satisfaction as well as respect from colleagues, and the organization benefits from the opportunities for integration and socialization into the profession that mentoring relationships can provide.

Fulton (1990) focuses on mentoring relationships in a specific environment: the reference department. She states that ideally, the head of the reference department can serve as mentor for reference librarians who are just beginning their careers. She looks at ways in which the department head may serve as mentor in the arenas of education and preparation, application of theory to practice, orientation and job skill training, social and political integration, and supporter. For Fulton, the process of training new librarians is a type of mentoring relationship.

Cargill (1989) states that established leaders in the field should look at mentoring as a means of developing the leadership potential of new librarians. Cargill identifies four roles that mentors can play: developer of skills, developer of careers, promoter of professional activities, and counselor. By filling these roles, established leaders can cultivate the leaders of tomorrow.

Taylor (1999) proposes that mentoring relationships can involve more than just junior or newly minted information professionals. Those who have been in the field for some time but are changing career paths, as well as those who need guidance or support, are also potential candidates for a mentoring relationship. Taylor suggests that developing a relationship with a mentor may be a technique used by established professionals as a means of evaluating, developing, and acquiring new competencies.

The College Library Directors Mentor Program is described by Hardesty (1997). This program, established in 1992, provides librarians who have been newly appointed as library directors at small colleges with access to a volunteer mentor who is an established director in a similar environment. To date, most participants have rated the program a success. New library directors overcome any sense of isolation they might feel on their campuses and are able to learn from the experiences of others, while established directors are given the chance to reevaluate their own practice.

Tolson (1998) states that no matter whether one is a new graduate or a seasoned professional, there are times “when the advice of a mentor can broaden your thinking, help you with resolutions, and aid you in developing your career” (p. 37). Stating that a good mentoring relationship will help a mentee meet his or her own needs, she provides a list of considerations for information professionals who are seeking a mentor, including choosing a mentor who is interested in the development of the mentee’s career, employed in a responsible position within their company, and is trustworthy. Interestingly, Tolson suggests finding one or two mentors who are not in the same institution as the mentee, as these may provide more objective input. She also states that while peers may be helpful, they should be viewed not as mentors but as supporters.



This is in direct contract with Stokes (1994), who proposes that peer-to-peer mentoring is an ideal way for information professionals to gain knowledge and broaden their network of colleagues (p. 36). Peer-to-peer mentoring involves a relationship between an information professional and a peer from another department. Each individual must possess some knowledge or skill not held by the other, and must be willing to share this knowledge or skill (i.e., “ an IS manager with considerable technical knowledge and skill and a peer with strong business know-how and interpersonal skills who have common career ambitions and who both lack formal learning resources (p. 36)).

Stokes also advocates the use of mentoring relationships as a means of developing one’s career. He suggests, however, that mentoring often is not applied by professionals who work with information systems, for a variety of reasons:

- Lack of familiarity with the concepts and processes of mentoring;
- Isolation of IS departments from other departments in an organization, which may lead to lack of contacts with potential mentors;
- Close personal nature of some supportive relationships, combined with the introverted nature of many IS professionals, which may inhibit the initiation of contacts;
- Commitment of time and energy required for mentoring;
- Lack of a perceived balance of benefits for both parties in the relationship; and
- Lack of role models. “If a person has not been mentored during his or her career, that person is probably unaware of the benefits of such a relationship” (p. 37).

Stokes concludes by offering guidelines for establishing a formal mentoring program as well as suggesting steps for establishing a mentoring relationship.

Lary (1998), however, believes that a mentoring relationship is not something that can be demanded. Rather, those who benefit most from mentoring relationships are those who find each other. She points out that although new professionals may develop many supportive relationships, not all of these relationships will be “true” mentoring

relationships. She defines mentoring as “a professional supportive relationship between an experienced, successful mid-career employee and a beginner...[It] helps to initiate/cement a professional network which influences progress, responsibilities, exposure, and growth in a particular field—usually a specialized area of a field” (p. 23). She emphasizes that mentoring is “a mutually evolving relationship,” and that the intense nature of the relationship requires special characteristics of both those who would be mentors and candidates for mentoring. As a result of the potential difficulties discussed earlier and because of the special characteristics required of both mentor and mentee, mentoring relationships tend to develop slowly out of mutual commitment between two individuals. It appears that Lary would frown upon those who suggest finding a mentor through either demanding one or being assigned to a mentoring relationship through a formal program.

Many of the librarians cited in Houdek (1999) appear to have developed the kind of mutually evolving relationship described by Lary. The law librarians who contributed to the article created word portraits of their mentors and their relationships with them. Although some of the mentors described sound somewhat abrasive or otherwise not always pleasant, the librarians describing them certainly give them much credit for teaching them about their profession. This article is especially useful for providing a glimpse of the variety of personalities and approaches to mentoring that may be successful.

A handbook containing extensive guidelines for both mentors and mentees is provided by Fisher (1994). In addition to information on formal mentoring programs, informal mentoring and other variations, such as “master mentors” and the uses of

mentors for distance learning, are also discussed. Fisher (1997) provides an additional resource for librarians interested in mentoring. This brief article provides an overview of mentoring programs in England, as well as mentoring-related resources online.

Kreitz (1992) points to the importance of mentoring early in a career in the information professions. Through an informal poll of library paraprofessionals who decided to pursue an MLS, Kreitz discovered that two important factors in their decision to attain the advanced degree were “1) a vision of librarianship as a challenging, rewarding career, and 2) a positive mentoring experience” (p. 237). Thus, mentoring by a professional appears to have an effect on the career decisions of non-professionals. Kreitz suggests that modeling some of the rewarding aspects of professional librarianship and being a supportive mentor to paraprofessionals can be effective ways of encouraging them to enter the profession. Massey (1995) also proposes that mentoring support staff can be beneficial in many ways, including helping to alleviate the stresses caused by constantly changing technologies. Mentoring may help employees be more productive by helping mentees see the “big picture.”

Burrington (1993) points out that mentoring of library personnel is ultimately “an investment in people and organizations (p. 227). Mentoring, she suggests, may be seen as similar to counseling, in that one of the benefits is that good guidance can reduce levels of stress in those being mentored. Lower stress levels can mean less staff turnover, which in turn leads to savings for the organization on staff recruitment and training. Golian and Galbraith (1996) also suggest that mentoring may be useful for preventing burnout, as well as for recruitment and career development.

Some of the general literature on mentoring discusses how mentoring relationships can benefit women and minorities. These perspectives on mentoring are reflected in the library and information science literature by Logsdon (1992) and Hernández (1994), respectively. Logsdon discusses how strategic use of mentoring by women can help them overcome institutionalized sexism and break into the “old boys’ network;” Hernández discusses how the same strategy can assist members of traditionally underrepresented groups attain positions of leadership in the field.

Much of the European literature on mentoring is covered by Nankivell and Shoolbred (1997). The authors provide highlights of the advantages, problems, and key issues of mentoring and how these relate to library and information science. They also discuss a research project conducted in Britain that surveyed LIS professionals on mentoring in their organizations as well as their own personal experiences with mentoring. The study revealed considerable demand for mentoring in the field and that such mentoring can be a valuable tool for development of both individuals and the profession. The project found four essential elements of a successful mentoring relationship: 1) the partners must get along well; 2) there must be mutual respect between partners; 3) both partners must make a commitment of time and energy; and 4) a mentoring relationship is evolutionary in nature and may develop beyond its original scope. The study also revealed that rigidly structured relationships are not conducive to successful mentoring.

Little attention has been paid in the literature to the effects of mentoring and other supportive relationships upon graduate students in schools of information and library science. A review of the literature uncovered four examples, all of which involve formal

or structured mentoring programs. The University of Texas at Austin General Libraries and the Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS) instituted a pilot formal mentoring program in 1986 (Rice-Lively 1991). The program was designed to give students the chance to integrate theory with practice. GSLIS students who wished to apply for the program must have completed at least two of three introductory courses and needed recommendations from their advisors. They are then screened and matched with potential mentors by a committee. Volunteer mentors from all levels of the General Libraries staff must have been on the staff as a professional librarian for at least one year. Mentors and mentees are required to devote at least six hours per semester to mentoring activities. According to Rice-Lively, both mentors and mentees have expressed a great deal of satisfaction with their experiences in the program.

Mentoring by library school alumni is another means of providing guidance and support to LIS students. Dragovich and Margeton (1995) provide an assessment of the mentoring program established by the Alumni Board of the Catholic University of America's library school. Volunteer mentors who were alumni were paired with currently enrolled students. Dragovich and Margeton write that one of the benefits of having mentors who are alumni rather than faculty is that such mentors are able to speak from experience about career and employment opportunities. They therefore are positioned to provide students with counsel about the job market as well as opportunities available through professional associations. Through its mentoring program, the Alumni Board is able to generate a greater degree of alumni involvement with the school while providing a valuable service to current students.

The only formal study to date of mentoring relationships in LIS programs is that of a program established in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at UCLA. Kaplowitz (1992) describes the results of a survey of participants in the mentoring program, which involved matching graduate students in the school with information professionals throughout Southern California. The survey revealed that most participants were pleased with the program. Mentoring relationships were seen to work for a variety of reasons, particularly when those paired shared some common interests outside of librarianship. Mentor-mentee pairs showed a preference for developing meetings and strategies that best suited their own interests and constraints. This finding corroborates Stokes' suggestion that "There is no one best way or specific model or paradigm for successful mentoring" (1994: p. 37).

One of the benefits of the UCLA program and, presumably, others like it is that professionals who act as mentors to graduate students "get the opportunity...to show the students that those...who already work in the profession care about those who are about to join [it]" (Kaplowitz 1992: p. 226). As Kaplowitz notes, "If [practicing information professionals] are unable to offer [their] help, advice, encouragement, and support to...soon-to-be professionals, then who will?" (p. 226).

As electronic forms of communication become more common, new models of mentoring are developing. Mentoring by e-mail is one such model. Henderson (1996) describes how students in her Technical Services Functions course at the University of Illinois were matched with mentors for the duration of the course. These mentors served specifically to assist the students in answering questions and making comments that were to be of help on the term paper for the course. Henderson writes that the mentors served

as “professional[s] helping to guide future professionals through an understanding of the issues raised in the course or raised by the student or mentor[s]” (p. 142). Students found the “real world” contact with mentors valuable in connecting lessons learned in the classroom with work-related issues, while mentors appreciated the opportunity to reflect upon their own work experiences.

Although there has been some study of formal programs for mentoring of library and information science students, there are no published studies to date of what these students do in the absence of such structured programs. Do these students find mentors, and, if so, what are their experiences? Who are the mentors, and how do the relationships develop? This study was designed to provide the answers to these questions and others by providing a descriptive analysis of the mentoring relationships developed by graduate students in one school of information and library science.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

A survey was administered to a group of graduate students at the School of Information and Library Science (SILS) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, who were members of the cohort of students who entered SILS in the fall semester of 1999. The survey instrument focused on these students who had completed a year and a half of coursework at SILS and inquired about their experiences with mentors or in other supportive relationships, if any, during the periods of their enrollment.

#### **Subjects**

All subjects were students enrolled in either of the two master of science degree tracks offered at SILS. The cohort comprising the population for this study originally had 64 members, not including the author. Five of these members had graduated prior to administration of the survey in the spring semester of 2001, bringing the total number of individuals who received the survey instrument to 59. Of the remaining study participants, 22 (37.3 percent) were enrolled in the information science track (IS), while 37 (62.7 percent) were in the library science track (LS).

This cohort was selected because its members were expected to have had the greatest chance of experiencing a long-term mentoring or other supportive relationship during their enrollment. Most members of the cohorts of students that had entered SILS earlier had already graduated, while the younger cohorts had not yet had enough time to establish long-term supportive relationships. Members of the study group, however, were in the process of completing their fourth regular semester of courses, so they had been in



residence long enough to have established strong supportive relationships, yet the cohort had experienced little attrition due to graduating members. Therefore it was hoped that this cohort of students would provide the best opportunity for data collection.

### **Survey**

The survey was pretested on several other library and information science students who were not members of the study population in order to determine what revisions were necessary. After this pretesting, the survey instrument was revised and then distributed on March 22, 2001, to members of the study population via their mail folders in Manning Hall, home of the School of Information and Library Science. A cover letter explaining the nature and purpose of the study and the rights of participants was attached to each copy of the survey (Appendix A). Participants were given a full week to complete the survey (Appendix B), which was to be returned to the author's mail folder anonymously.

Questions developed for the instrument were derived after surveying the literature related to supportive and mentoring relationships and behaviors. Questions were grouped into four sections. Questions 1a-2b asked the participants about whether or not they had experienced a supportive relationship during their time at SILS and some basic demographic data about the individual they considered their primary or most personally influential supporter. A working definition of supportive relationships to be used in the survey was presented in question 1a, along with some limiting factors. If the individual indicated that they had not had any experiences with a mentor or other strong supporter, they were asked if they would have liked to have had such a relationship and were directed to the third section. Questions 3-17 asked the survey participants to rate on a

Likert scale their agreement with statements made about their primary supportive relationship. It also contained one question about how the mentoring relationship developed. The third section, questions 18-22b, asked the respondents about any previous experience with individuals they would consider to be mentors as well as about their employment while at SILS. Questions 23-28 requested basic demographic and career data. The survey ended with an open-ended question to allow space for participants to add any additional comments.

### **Limitations of the Survey**

This survey had some limitations. Some participants indicated confusion over exactly what constituted a mentoring relationship as opposed to some other type of supportive relationship. As mentioned above in the review of the literature, this lack of an agreed-upon definition is reflected in the literature. Indeed, Merriam (1983) states, “Clearly, how mentoring is defined determines the extent of mentoring found” (p. 165). Confusion over what constitutes a mentor may have affected some of the answers given in this study. One respondent noted,

I didn’t know how to answer 18a and b, largely because the term “mentor” is somewhat ambiguous to me. Is a faculty advisor automatically a mentor if you have a good, supportive relationship? I had a boss and various profs who I admired and patterned myself after—are they professional mentors, intellectual mentors—both? Neither?

Also, the Likert scale should probably have been clearly labeled, as a small number of respondents apparently reversed the order of the numbers by marking “1” for answers with which they strongly agreed and “5” for those with which they strongly disagreed. This reversal was made clearly evident by other answers given elsewhere in

the survey, so answers on the Likert scale were reversed for those questionnaires on which the intention of the respondent could be readily determined.

#### IV. RESULTS

Of the 59 individuals who were given the survey instrument, 42 returned completed and valid surveys, for a response rate of 71.2 percent. The survey data was gathered from the questionnaires and coded. Summary statistics were gleaned from the data to enable the formation of general impressions of the experiences of SILS masters students' experiences with supportive relationships and their attitudes toward those experiences. Unfortunately, the sample size is very small; however, some interesting trends are revealed.

Thirty-four (81 percent) of the respondents were female, and 8 (19 percent) were male. Table 1 provides basic demographic information on survey respondents. Ten (26.3 percent) of the survey respondents indicated that they had already earned additional advanced degrees. Of these, three had MA degrees in history. Degrees in law were the next most common with two represented. In addition, there was one MA in art history, one MA in Christian education, one MAT in English, one MALS Interdisciplinary, and one teaching certificate.

*Table 1: Sex, Degree Program, and Age Ranges of Respondents*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>IS</b>	<b>LS</b>	<b>Advanced Degree?</b>	<b>20-24</b>	<b>25-29</b>	<b>30-34</b>	<b>35-39</b>	<b>40-44</b>	<b>45-49</b>	<b>50-54</b>	<b>55+</b>
<b>Female</b>	34	10	24	7	6	12	7	5	2	1	1	0
<b>Male</b>	8	3	5	3	0	4	3	0	1	0	0	0

Nearly all of the respondents (41, or 97.6 percent) worked full- or part-time during the period of their enrollment. Over three quarters (78.6 percent) of these jobs were on the UNC-CH campus or were otherwise affiliated with SILS/UNC-CH. Twenty-eight (66.7 percent) of those who were employed had held two or more different positions while enrolled. Table 2 summarizes this data.

*Table 2: Employment While Enrolled*

<b>Worked ft/pt while enrolled</b>	<b>More than one such position held during enrollment</b>	<b>On-campus or affiliated with SILS/UNC-CH</b>
41 (97.6%)	28 (66.7%)	33 (78.6%)

Thirty, or 71.4 percent, of the respondents answered “yes” to Question 1a (“While enrolled at SILS, has there been an individual (other than spouse, significant other, ILSSA<sup>1</sup>-assigned mentor, or family) who has taken a personal interest in enhancing, enriching, or otherwise encouraging your development as an information professional?”). The majority (22, or 73.3 percent) of those who believed that they had a supportive relationship of this type indicated that they had experienced more than one such relationship during their time at SILS. Ten of these reported two such supportive relationships; the remainder reported three or more such relationships. One respondent reported 8 such relationships! It is unclear whether this respondent may have had an overgenerous interpretation of mentoring. The remaining seven respondents who answered Question 1a affirmatively reported having only one person with whom they had such a relationship.

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<sup>1</sup> N.B. ILSSA is the acronym for the student body group at SILS, the Information and Library Science Students Association. At the start of each fall and spring, ILSSA assigns student “mentors” to incoming students to ease their transition to graduate student life.

One student noted that she had initially hoped to find a single mentor: “However, I couldn’t find a single mentor to understand the whole of my desire. I just broke my desire into small pieces,” which enabled her to find a mentor for each aspect of her career and life plan. This strategy is like the one recommended by Shapiro *et al.* (1978), who suggest having several role models.

Eighty percent of the small population of students holding additional advanced degrees reported having one or more mentoring relationships. It would be interesting to determine whether students who already hold advanced degrees believe in the value of mentoring at the preprofessional level, and therefore are more open to mentoring relationships, or if they display some quality that makes them more attractive to potential mentors.

Table 3 provides information on the respondents who did not have a mentor while at SILS. Only twelve respondents (28.6 percent) stated that they did not have a mentor. Eight of these twelve, however, indicated that they would have liked to experience a mentoring relationship during their enrollment. Proportionally, more males than females reported that they did not have a mentoring relationship. All of the male respondents

*Table 3: Students Without Mentoring Relationship*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>IS (n=13)</b>	<b>LS (n=29)</b>	<b>Wanted Mentor At SILS</b>	<b>% of Gender</b>
<b>Female (n=34)</b>	3	6	5	14.7%
<b>Male (n=8)</b>	2	1	3	37.5%

who did not have a mentor, however, expressed interest in having one. One such respondent stated that although he felt he was in a position where he could have been mentored by his supervisor, he never felt that she showed any interest in encouraging his

development as an information professional. Ultimately, this experience caused him to leave his job to seek a more beneficial situation. Another student stated that he felt his potential mentors were “inattentive” and either “blew [him] off” or were otherwise not interested. Curiously, two women indicated that they were not at all interested in having a mentor. It would be interesting to learn why this is so, but unfortunately neither respondent provided any further information in the space provided by the final question of the survey.

Twenty-five females (83.3 percent) indicated the presence of one or more supporters, with five males (16.7 percent) responding affirmatively. Table 4 presents information on the genders of both respondents and their primary supporting relationships. As noted above, proportionally more women than men reported

*Table 4: Gender of Respondents and Supporters*

<b>Gender of Respondent</b>	<b>% Reporting Supporter</b>	<b>Female Supporter</b>	<b>Male Supporter</b>	<b>No Answer</b>
<b>Female</b> (n=25)	73.5%	14 (56.0%)	10 (40.0%)	1 (4.0%)
<b>Male</b> (n=5)	62.5%	4 (80.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0

having a supporter. Also of note is the impression that women were almost equally likely to have either a male or female primary supporter, whereas male respondents appear to have primarily female primary supporters. It would be interesting to attempt this study with a much larger survey population to see if this trend holds; if so, it runs counter to much of the common wisdom about mentoring relationships that indicates that same-sex mentoring relationships are the norm. It is probably a reflection of the fact that the LIS field has traditionally employed more women than is the case in many other professions.

One question that it was hoped this survey would answer is on the relationship between age and the development of supportive relationships. Table 5 shows the percentages of each age range reporting a supportive relationship. Evidence from the literature on mentoring suggests that younger members of a cohort are more likely to seek out and form supportive relationships due to the stage of life they are in (cf. Levinson *et al.*, 1978); however, the data suggest that age may not play as much of a role in the formation of supportive relationships in this situation as expected.

**Table 5: Percentage of Age Range Reporting Supportive Relationship**

<b>20-24</b> (n=6)	<b>25-29</b> (n=16)	<b>30-34</b> (n=10)	<b>35-39</b> (n=5)	<b>40-44</b> (n=3)	<b>45-49</b> (n=1)	<b>50-54</b> (n=1)
50.0%	75.0%	60.0%	100.0%	66.6%	100.0%	100.0%

Thirteen (31 percent) of the 42 respondents were enrolled in the information science track. The remaining 29 (69 percent) respondents were enrolled in the library science track. This response rate is roughly comparable to the percentages of the survey population enrolled in the MSIS and MSLS tracks (37.3 and 62.7 percent, respectively). Table 6 summarizes the relative responses of the members of these two tracks regarding their supportive relationships. Interestingly, a smaller percentage of IS students reported having a supporting relationship than did LS students.

**Table 6: Rates of IS and LS Students Reporting Supportive Relationships**

<b>Degree Program</b>	<b>Reported Supportive Relationship</b>	<b>Female Supporter</b>	<b>Male Supporter</b>	<b>No Gender Indicated</b>
<b>Information Science (IS)</b> (n=13)	8 (61.5%)	5 (62.5%)	3 (37.5%)	0%
<b>Library Science (LS)</b> (n=29)	22 (75.9%)	13 (59.1%)	8 (36.4%)	1 (4.5%)



Question 2a asked respondents to describe their primary supporter in terms of his or her relationship to the respondent. Over one-third (40.0%) indicated that a faculty member (presumably at SILS) was their primary supporter, while close to a third (30.0%) indicated that their immediate supervisor at their place of employment filled this role. Tables 7 and 8 summarize these data on relationships.

**Table 7: Relationships of Mentors to Respondents**

<b>Relationship of Mentor to Respondent</b>	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>
Peer/fellow student (n=3)	10.0%
Faculty member (n=12)	40.0%
Immediate supervisor at place of employment (n=9)	30.0%
Other superior at place of employment (n=4)	13.3%
Other coworker (n=1)	3.3%
Other (n=1)	3.3%

**Table 8: Gender of Student and Relationship of Mentor**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Peer/Fellow Student</b>	<b>Faculty Member</b>	<b>Immediate Supervisor</b>	<b>Other Superior</b>	<b>Other Coworker</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Female</b> (n=25)	2	9	9	3	1	1
<b>Male</b> (n=5)	1	3	0	1	0	0

Based on these responses, it would appear that school and work are, unsurprisingly, the primary places where ILS students find their mentors. If we add the percentages of respondents who indicated that their immediate supervisor, other superior, or other coworker fill the role of primary supporter, it becomes apparent that the workplace is a prime location for finding such support, with almost half (46.6 percent) of respondents reporting such a relationship. One respondent had such a successful relationship with a former employer that he remained her mentor at the time of the survey.

Only 10.0 percent of respondents relied on peer pals as their primary source of support. One respondent wrote, “I did not have a mentor, but if I did, I would have wanted this person to be a professional and not another student. I would have wanted someone to go to for advice on trends within the field, possible career directions, etc.” Although students may rely on their peers for support and some advice, it is clear that peers are not their primary source for mentoring.

Questions 3 through 16 asked survey participants to rate, on a scale from 1 to 5, their reactions to statements about their relationship with their primary supporter. Results are summarized in Table 9.

**Table 9: Ratings of Mentoring Functions**

<b>Statement About Mentor</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Agree Strongly</b>
Individual teaches useful technical skills	16.7%	13.3%	26.7%	26.7%	16.7%
Individual provides encouragement and praise	3.3%	0%	3.3%	30.0%	63.3%
Individual helps learn political dynamics	3.3%	6.7%	16.7%	23.3%	50.0%
Respondent turns to this individual for advice	3.3%	0%	20.0%	26.7%	50.0%
Individual provides emotional support	3.3%	3.3%	33.3%	16.7%	43.3%
Individual exemplifies/encourages professional standards	6.7%	0%	3.3%	40.0%	50.0%
Individual acts as a supporter by providing references, recommendations, etc.	3.3%	0%	6.7%	23.3%	66.7%
Respondent views individual as role model	3.3%	3.3%	3.3%	30.0%	60.0%
Relationship with individual has been beneficial professionally	0%	3.3%	10.0%	16.7%	70.0%
Relationship with individual has been beneficial personally	3.3%	0%	13.3%	33.3%	50.0%
Respondent considers individual to be their mentor	0%	3.3%	23.3%	23.3%	50.0%
Relationship has influenced respondent's career decisions	3.3%	3.3%	26.7%	40.0%	26.7%
Respondent is glad to have relationship	3.3%	0%	0%	10.0%	86.7%
Respondent would like to be a mentor	0%	0%	6.7%	6.7%	86.7%

The responses were equivocal to question 3, which asked whether the respondent believes that s/he has learned useful skills from his/her mentor. Nearly all of those who

answered “agree” or “strongly agree” had mentors from their workplaces, while all of those who chose “strongly disagree” had mentors who were peer pals or faculty members. It is to be hoped that students will learn useful skills in their workplace, so it is not surprising that workplace mentors teach such skills to their mentees. The fact that some respondents felt that they did not learn useful technical skills from their faculty mentor, however, may indicate the presence of the proverbial split between theory and practice.

Responses to the remaining statements tended to be clustered toward the positive end of the scale, with a majority of respondents answering “agree” or “strongly agree.” Students overwhelmingly indicated that they were glad to have experienced their relationships with their mentors, with 96.7 percent answering “agree” or “strongly agree.”

One has to wonder at the response of one student who indicated that he strongly disagreed with the statement, “I am glad to have had this relationship with this person.” This respondent answered “strongly disagree” in response to eight of the fourteen statements in this section of the questionnaire; however, he answered that he strongly agrees that he considers this person to be his mentor. It is probable that this respondent may have reversed the poles of the Likert scale, answering “strongly disagree” when he meant “strongly agree,” and vice versa. It may also be that he misread question 1a and believed that answers about ILSSA-assigned student mentors were acceptable, as he indicated that the person he considered his mentor was a peer or fellow student.

Overall, however, most students appeared to be satisfied with their mentoring relationships. Most indicated that they agreed that the people they considered as their mentors were, in fact, filling the traditional roles of mentors: providing encouragement,

emotional support, and advice; acting as a supporter both professionally and personally; educating their mentees about the rules and politics of their chosen profession; and generally being a role model for professional and perhaps personal development.

Perhaps most encouraging is the overwhelmingly positive response to the last statement which asked students whether or not they would like to mentor someone in the future. Only two had neutral responses, and one of these was the student mentioned above who indicated that he was not happy to have had his relationship with his mentor. The remainder (93.4 percent) responded affirmatively, which bodes well for the profession. These positive responses are in accord with statements made in the literature that indicate that persons who are mentored are more likely to mentor others in the future (Hunt and Michael 1983).

Respondents were asked in question 7 to determine how their relationship with their mentor developed. These results are summarized in Table 10. Fully half of the respondents indicated that their relationships with their mentors “just happened.” This

*Table 10: Origin of Relationship*

<b>Origin of Relationship</b>	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>
Assigned as part of formal mentoring program (n=1)	3.3%
Respondent initiated relationship (n=4)	13.3%
Supporter initiated relationship (n=4)	13.3%
Unable to determine – relationship just ‘happened’ (n=15)	50.0%
Other (n=6)	20.0%

finding is in keeping with some of the suggestions made in the literature (e.g., Lary 1998). Two students expressed positive views of this type of unplanned formation of mentoring relationships. One student commented,

I don't think the most beneficial mentor relationships occur because they are "assigned." I believe the best mentor/mentee relationships just "happen." I.e., two people meet, hit it off, and they then help each other.

Another respondent concurred:

I find that the best relationships of this type develop serendipitously – two people who are assigned to a mentor/mentee relationship may not mesh on a personal level and then the relationship fizzles...

Six respondents (20.0 percent) indicated that the origin of their relationship did not fall under any of the suggested categories. Most of these indicated that they worked with their mentor (e.g., "She is my boss,"), which suggests that the relationship grew out of working closely together.

Twenty of all respondents indicated that they had experienced a mentoring relationship prior to their enrollment at SILS. Of these, only three (15 percent) indicated they did not having a mentor while at SILS. Conversely, of the twenty-one respondents who stated that they had not had a mentoring relationship prior to coming to SILS, nine (42.9 percent) also did not have a mentoring relationship while at SILS. This relationship indicates that perhaps there is some factor that causes certain individuals to be more successful than others at developing supportive relationships.

Fourteen (70 percent) of those who indicated they had experienced a mentoring relationship prior to coming to SILS credited this relationship with influencing their decision to enter the field of library and information science. This statistic demonstrates the importance of mentors in affecting the career paths of their mentees. It also supports the argument made by Kreitz (1992) regarding the impact of mentoring on the decision of paraprofessionals to earn an advanced degree in library and information science.

One student did not respond to questions 18a and 18b because of her uncertainty as to what constitutes a mentor. Her comments, already partially quoted above in the section on limitations of the survey, are reproduced in part here:

I didn't know how to answer 18a and b, largely because the term "mentor" is somewhat ambiguous to me...I had a boss and various profs who I admired and patterned myself after...Had they dismissed my efforts to attend library school, I may well have decided against going. Does this reliance on acceptance indicate implicit or explicit mentorship?

The final question of the survey allowed respondents to share any additional comments they had about the survey or their experiences with mentors. Fourteen (38.9 percent) of respondents chose to provide additional comments, some of which are reproduced verbatim below:

"I think each student needs to develop a personal/professional relationship with a faculty member before graduating. It helps introduce one to the 'real world.'"

"A very *large* number of theological librarians come into this specific field through mentoring relationships...I could talk forever about my mentor relationship."

"I have both mentored and been a mentee. Both experiences taught me many lessons, both good and bad."

"I'm also hoping that I find some sort of mentor after leaving SILS in my first position after grad school."

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The results of this survey represent a descriptive analysis of the mentoring relationships of graduate students in library and information science. The literature on mentoring demonstrates that mentoring has many benefits for both mentors and mentees, as well as for professions as a whole. At this time when our profession is changing so rapidly, any strategies that can be of benefit should be thoroughly investigated and routinely applied.

The survey results indicate that students in graduate programs in library and information science believe they receive mentoring while enrolled. Most felt that having a relationship with a mentor was beneficial to them personally and professionally. These students expressed that they will most likely try to act as a mentor to someone else in the future.

One implication of this study is schools of library and information science may need to foster dialogues on mentoring with information professionals at workplaces that employ large numbers of LIS students. The survey results indicated that almost half of the students were mentored by someone at the workplace. It is important to educate information professionals in such places about the benefits and techniques of mentoring so that they can perhaps assist in the development of preprofessionals and, thereby, the profession as a whole.

It has often been said that we live in the Information Age. As the talents and skills of information professionals become more and more in demand, it will benefit the

profession to study how these skills and talents may be enhanced and augmented in both formal and informal ways. One possibility for further research in this area could be a longitudinal study of the effects of mentoring, beginning with subjects at the preprofessional stage and following them through their professional lives. Further research might also investigate the effects of gender or ethnicity on recruitment and retention of students.

Mentoring is one means by which both personal and professional development may be encouraged. Mentoring of students in information and library science provides an opportunity for planting seeds of professionalism that will result in a flourishing crop of new professionals, thereby enhancing not only the growth of mentored individuals but also benefiting the profession as a whole.



## Appendix A: Letter to Survey Population

21 March 2001

Dear Classmates,

All of you who receive this letter and questionnaire entered SILS together in the fall of 1999. For my master's paper, I am conducting a study of mentoring of library and information science students, and I have chosen to focus my research on the experiences of our cohort of students. Although much research has been conducted in other fields that demonstrates the benefits of mentoring to individuals and their professions, little has been conducted in our field regarding the value of mentoring of individuals who have not yet received their professional degrees. It is my hope that this study will illuminate the ways in which mentoring manifests itself in the professional school environment and will also provide a picture of what you as students feel about the mentoring process.

To gather the data needed to write my master's paper, I am sending each of you the brief, anonymous questionnaire attached to this letter. In it, I ask a variety of questions concerning you, your experiences, and your mentor (if applicable). It should take you no more than five minutes or so to complete. Please take a look at the questions, complete the questionnaire and return it to my mail folder in Manning Hall by Friday, March 30. Please do not write your name or make any other identifying marks on the questionnaire, as your answers need to remain anonymous. I will summarize the data and report it in my master's paper; any individual answers that are reported in the final paper will, of course, remain anonymous. You are free not to respond to specific questions, and you can choose to not participate by not returning the survey.

**There are only 64 students in the cohort that entered in the fall of 1999! Because the number of people I am surveying is so small, each response is very important.** I hope you will take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire and help advance this research. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by e-mail at [chamc@ils.unc.edu](mailto:chamc@ils.unc.edu) or phone at 960-9675, or you may contact my paper advisor, Dr. Barbara Moran, at [moran@ils.unc.edu](mailto:moran@ils.unc.edu) or at 960-8067.

Thanks for your help!

Clint Chamberlain

You may contact the UNC-CH Academic Affairs Institutional Review Board at the following address and telephone number at any time during this study if you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant:

Academic Affairs Institutional Review Board  
Barbara Davis Goldman, Ph.D., Chair  
CB# 4100, 201 Bynum Hall  
The Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27599-4100  
(919) 962-7761, or Email: [aa-irb@unc.edu](mailto:aa-irb@unc.edu)

## Appendix B: Questionnaire for Mentoring Study

- 1a. While enrolled at SILS, has there been an individual (other than spouse, significant other, ILSSA-assigned mentor, or family) who has taken a personal interest in enhancing, enriching, or otherwise encouraging your development as an information professional?
- yes                      no

- 1b. If “no,” do you wish you had such a relationship?    yes              no

**If your answer to question #1a is “no,” please go to question #18a. Otherwise, please continue.**

- 1c. Is there more than one such person?    yes                      no
- 1d. If “yes,” how many? \_\_\_\_\_ persons

**If your answer to question #1c is “yes,” please decide which of these persons has had the greatest influence on you, and use information about that person in answering any relevant questions that follow.**

- 2a. How would you categorize that person? **Please be sure your answers apply only to the person who has had the greatest influence on you.**

peer/fellow student  
 faculty member  
 immediate supervisor at place of employment  
 other superior at place of employment  
 other coworker  
 other (please specify:\_\_\_\_\_)

- 2b. This person is:                      male                      female

**For questions #3-#16, please indicate your response by circling the appropriate number on the scale following each question, where “1”= “strongly disagree” and “5”= “strongly agree”:**

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 3. This person teaches me useful technical skills.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. This person provides me with encouragement and praise.                                     | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. This person helps me learn about the political dynamics of my workplace and/or profession. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. I often turn to this person for advice.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. This person provides me with emotional support.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. This person exemplifies and encourages me to follow professional standards.                | 1 2 3 4 5 |

9. This person acts as a supporter for me by serving as an employment reference, recommending my work to others, etc. 1 2 3 4 5
10. I view this person as a role model. 1 2 3 4 5
11. My relationship with this person has been beneficial to me professionally. 1 2 3 4 5
12. My relationship with this person has been beneficial to me on a personal level. 1 2 3 4 5
13. I consider this person to be my mentor. 1 2 3 4 5
14. My relationship with this person has helped influence my career decisions. 1 2 3 4 5
15. I am glad to have had this relationship with this person. 1 2 3 4 5
16. If given the opportunity in the future, I would like to help another person by being a mentor to them. 1 2 3 4 5
17. How did your relationship with this person develop?  
 assigned as part of formal mentoring program  
 I initiated the relationship  
 This person initiated the relationship  
 Unable to determine. It just "happened"  
 Other (please explain): \_\_\_\_\_
- 18a. Did you have a relationship of this nature with another person prior to coming to SILS?  
 yes no
- 18b. If "yes," did that relationship influence your decision to enter the field of library and information science?  
 yes no
19. Have you worked at a full- or part-time job or had a field experience related to your MSLS or MSIS studies during your enrollment at SILS?  
 yes no
20. Have you worked in more than one such position during your enrollment at SILS?  
 yes (please indicate how many: \_\_\_\_\_) no N/A
21. Were any of these places of employment or experience located on campus, or otherwise affiliated with SILS or UNC in any way?  
 yes no N/A
- 22a. Was the person about whom you answered questions #3-16 also employed at any of these places during the time you were there?  
 yes no N/A

- 22b. If 22a is “yes,” what was your primary duty at that particular job or field experience (e.g., reference, database design/maintenance, ILL, web design)?: \_\_\_\_\_
23. Are you:            male            female
24. Your age:            20-24            25-29            30-34            35-39  
                               40-44            45-49            50-54            55+
25. Please indicate which degree program you are in:            LS            IS
- 26a. Do you have a previous graduate degree?            yes            no
- 26b. If 26a is “yes,” please indicate your degree (MA, MS, MFA, PhD) and field:  
 \_\_\_\_\_.
27. What kind of job do you want after graduation from SILS?  
 \_\_\_\_\_.
28. Do you believe your relationship with your mentor will be of help to you in this type of job (i.e., getting the job, providing advice, etc.)?  
           yes            no            maybe            N/A
29. In this survey, I have tried to cover what I believe are the important aspects of a mentoring relationship. If there is anything you would like to add or tell me about your experience, please do so in the space below.

**Thank you for your time and participation!**

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